

Message Text

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USEEC

AGR PASS DEP ASST SEC SCHUH, M. WITCHER, OICD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR OECD
SUBJ: 51ST SESSION OF WORKING PARTY NO. 1 (AGRICULTURAL
POLICIES) OF THE COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE MEETING,
26-28 JUNE 1978

1. SUMMARY. GREEK AGRICULTURAL POLICIES WERE AIRED.
THEY ARE GOOD EXAMPLES OF MANY OVERLAPPING INTER-
VENTIONIST POLICIES, THE NET RESULT OF WHICH CANNOT BE
FULLY DETERMINED. MAIN ELEMENTS OF AGRO-FOOD POLICY
WERE DISCUSSED USING CANADA, NORWAY, AND ITALY CASE
STUDIES. BASE WAS LAID FOR COMPREHENSIVE STUDY BY
SECRETARIAT. END SUMMARY.

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2. CHAIRMAN POPP (SWITZERLAND) WAS UNABLE TO ATTEND
MEETING THUS VICE CHAIRMAN LEGER (FRANCE) AND
HINTIKKA (FINLAND) SHARED CHAIRMANSHIP DUTIES.

3. THE TWO MAIN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA WERE A COUNTRY
EXAMINATION OF RECENT TRENDS IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY OF

GREECE (AGR/WP1(78)5) AND A PAPER ON THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF A POLICY FOR THE AGRO-FOOD SECTOR (AGR/WPL(78)6).

4. THE COMPETENTLY PREPARED PAPER BY THE AGRICULTURAL DIRECTORATE ON GREEK AGRICULTURAL POLICIES WAS SUPPLEMENTED BY AN ABLE GROUP OF TECHNICAL EXPERTS FROM THE GREEK GOVERNMENT. THE FULL DAY DISCUSSION OF THIS PAPER WAS FRUSTRATINGLY HAMPERED BY FRENCH ACTING CHAIRMAN WHO REINTERPRETED EVERY QUESTION AND EVERY ANSWER AND EDITORIALIZED INTERMINABLY ON ALMOST EVERY COMMENT FROM AROUND THE TABLE. THE RESULT WAS A FAILURE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH KEY ISSUES RAISED BY THE SECRETARIAT'S PAPER AND FAILURE TO CAPITALIZE ON THE CAPABILITIES OF THE GREEK CONTINGENT.

5. GREEK AGRICULTURAL POLICY IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF INNUMERABLE INTERVENTIONS IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR WITH POLICY MEASURES OFTEN OPERATING AT CROSS PURPOSES. THE STRUCTURAL PROBLEM OF SMALL FARMS FRAGMENTED INTO EVEN SMALLER PARCELS IS ENORMOUS AND POSES SERIOUS CHALLENGES TO POLICY MAKERS. THE PROPOSED GREEK ENTRANCE INTO THE EC WILL FURTHER EXACERBATE THESE PROBLEMS PARTICULARLY FOR THE LIVESTOCK SECTOR WHERE THE GOVERNMENT HOPES TO FURTHER ENCOURAGE PRODUCTION. REGRETTABLY THESE ISSUES WERE DISCUSSED ONLY TANGENTIALLY DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF THE U.S. DELEGATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND OTHERS TO FOCUS ON THE RELEVANT PROBLEMS. THE ACTING CHAIRMAN SKILLFULLY KEPT DISCUSSION FOCUSED ON DOMESTIC PRICE AND INPUT POLICIES INSTEAD OF THE WIDER AND MORE IMPORTANT ISSUES.

6. THE SECRETARIAT PAPER ON THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF A POLICY FOR THE AGRO-FOOD SECTOR REPRESENTED A SUBSTANTIAL ADVANCE FROM THE DRAFT OUTLINE PRESENTED AT THE LAST WP1 MEETING. THE DISCUSSION WAS ABLY GUIDED BY THE FINNISH VICE-CHAIRMAN WHO FACILITATED DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN ISSUES. CASE STUDIES OF ATTEMPTS TO IMPLEMENT FOOD POLICIES IN CANADA, NORWAY AND ITALY WERE PRESENTED. THE CASE STUDY OF NORWAY PROVIDED THE FOCAL POINT FOR MOST OF THE DISCUSSION. THE NORWEGIAN OBJECTIVE TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN FOOD AS A MEANS OF DEALING WITH OTHER DOMESTIC AGRICULTURAL PROBLEMS DREW APPROPRIATE COMMENTS FROM THE DELEGATIONS OF THE U.S., CANADA, DENMARK AND NEW ZEALAND. THESE COMMENTS PROVIDED THE BASIS FOR BROADENING THE SCOPE OF WORK IN THE REVISED PAPER TO BE PREPARED BY THE SECRETARIAT.

7. THE U.S. DELEGATION PROPOSED AN OUTLINE OF THE
PROPOSED PAPER IN A MEANS-END SCHEMA. THIS OUTLINE

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WAS ACCEPTED BY THE DELEGATIONS AND THE SECRETARIAT
AND WILL BE USED FOR THE PAPER TO BE PRESENTED FOR
DISCUSSION BY THE WORKING PARTY IN APPROXIMATELY ONE
YEAR. THE U.S. DELEGATION ALSO TENTATIVELY OFFERED
THE U.S. AS ONE OF THE CASE STUDIES FOR INCLUSION
IN THE FINAL PAPER IN LIGHT OF THE UNIQUENESS OF THE
FOOD STAMP PROGRAM WHICH ENABLES POLICY-MAKERS TO
ATTAIN IMPORTANT DOMESTIC FOOD POLICY OBJECTIVES WITH-
OUT DISTORTING MARKET PRICES AND MARKET SIGNALS.
THE REPORT ON GREEK AGRICULTURAL POLICY WILL BE REVISED
BY THE SECRETARIAT ON THE BASIS OF THE DISCUSSION AND
A DRAFT TEXT ON POLICY CONCLUSIONS WILL BE CIRCULATED
TO MEMBER COUNTRIES FOR WRITTEN APPROVAL.

8. AGRICULTURAL POLICY DIVISION DIRECTOR RAIDL
REQUESTED GOVERNMENTS TO SEND PERTINENT INFORMATION
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FOR INCLUSION IN THE ANNUAL POLICY
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REVIEW.

9. THE MAJOR ITEM ON THE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT WP NO. 1 MEETING WILL BE THE AGRICULTURAL POLICY REVIEW. AN ADDITIONAL ITEM FOR DISCUSSION WILL BE A SECRETARIAT NOTE ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RELATIONS.

10. A U.S. PROPOSAL TO STRENGTHEN THE GREEK AGRICULTURAL POLICY STUDY BY INSERTION OF A BROADER DISCUSSION OF THE SETTING OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND ITS LINKAGES WITHIN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY WAS ACCEPTED BY THE DELEGATES, GREECE AND THE SECRETARIAT.

11. AN ORAL REPORT WAS PRESENTED BY THE SECRETARIAT ON THE RECENT EXPERTS MEETING ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INDICATORS. SECRETARIAT FOLLOWUP WORK TO THAT MEETING WILL INCLUDE (A) PREPARATION OF A SUMMARY REPORT OF THAT MEETING, (B) DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED AT THE MEETING THROUGH A USE OF THE NORWEGIAN CASE STUDY DISCUSSED AT WP1 TO (1) IDENTIFYING POLICY INTER-RELATIONSHIPS, (2) DESCRIBE INFORMATION NEEDS AND (3) EXAMINE USE OF INDICATORS AND INFORMATION IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION. (C) CIRCULATE THAT DOCUMENT TO MEMBER GOVERNMENTS WITH A QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING INDICATOR AND INFORMATION GAPS FOR POLICY MAKING IN MEMBER COUNTRIES AND (D) INCORPORATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS IN A SEPARATE DOCUMENT.

COMMENTS. THE USE OF THE NORWEGIAN CASE STUDY PREPARED FOR THE AGRO-FOOD POLICY PAPER IN THIS CONTEXT WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE U.S. AS PART OF A MOVE TO EXPLOIT THE COMPLEMENTARITIES OF VARIOUS PROJECTS UNDERWAY BY THE SECRETARIAT. END COMMENT.
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12. NEXT WP1 MEETING 4-7 DEC 1978.
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